

*LEUCODONTA BICOLORIA* SCHIFF. LEP.:  
NOTODONTIDAE (THE WHITE PROMINENT) —  
A POSSIBLE OCCURRENCE IN DORSET

By S. C. S. BROWN\*

About 1935 I met A. Ford of Southbourne, Bournemouth, for the first time. He was a man past middle life, and was an entomological dealer in a small way. He was particularly interested in the Coleoptera, and when searching for them in winter would at the same time dig around the base of trees for the pupae of Lepidoptera.

The following is the story as told to me in confidence by Ford, and as both participants have long since passed on, it is now possible for me to relate it:

In the spring of one year he sent to a customer of his a batch of pupae collected in the Poole area. A few weeks later Ford received a letter from him to say that he had bred a specimen of *Leucodontia bicoloria*, and in view of its extreme rarity, wanted an explanation. Ford assured him that he had not at any time kept foreign livestock, and that the pupae he had supplied him had been collected only by himself. Ford asked him (I was given his name — Baron Bouck), not to carry the matter any further, as if the story became known, he thought that he (Ford) might be accused of “planting” and his reputation as a dealer would suffer.

During the years I knew Ford I used to visit him at his house and I purchased from him a cabinet and some set insects, and I always looked upon him as being a straight forward and honest man. As far as I was aware, he did not collect nor breed Lepidoptera. I do not see any valid reason why *bicoloria* should not have occurred in Dorset, or indeed may still be there. Poole and its surrounds enjoys a mild and equitable climate, protected as it is on the East by the Isle of Wight, and on the West by the Isle of Purbeck. Birch is abundant in south-east Dorset, mainly as scrub on the open heaths, but growing to large trees in the moist, sheltered hollows.

As regards to the origin and distribution of the British lepidopterous fauna, the theory that seems to be generally accepted is the one that the majority of the species at present here came in during the Post Glacial Period at the end of the third Ice Age, and while part of Britain was connected to the Continent by a land-bridge at Kent and Sussex, and across the southern part of which is now the North Sea. As the ice-cap receded forests of pine and birch took its place. It could well have been that *Leucodonta bicoloria*, attached as it is solely to birch, was one of the first immigrants, spreading steadily west and northwards, and entering Ire-

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land across the land-bridge which still existed from south-western Scotland.

This species has been recorded in Britain from Killarney in Ireland, Burnt Wood in Staffordshire in 1861, and in 1880 one near Exeter, Devon. It has not been heard from its main locality in Ireland for some years, and is most probably extinct as a British species.

### References

- Beirne, B. P. 1947, The History of the British Macro-Lepidoptera. *Trans. R. Ent. Soc. Lond.* 98. Pt. 7. pp 273-372.
- Haynes, R. F., 1984. The Extraordinary tale of the white prominent; *Leucodonta bicoloria* D. & S. in County Kerry. *Entomologist's Record. J. Var.* 96: 1-6.
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NEURAPHES TALPARUM LOKAY (COL.: SCYDMAENIDAE) RECAPTURED IN S. E. LONDON. – On 16th October last I sieved an example of this uncommon species (= *N. rubicundus* auct. Brit. nec Schaum, see Allen, 1969, *Ent. Rec.* 81:240) out of damp debris at the bottom of a farmyard straw-stack at Shooters Hill near here. This appears to add another type of habitat to those already recorded (rotten wood, moss and dead leaves, and moles' nests, the latter evidently the primary one), but the reason for this seeming catholicity probably lies in a loose association with the nests and runs of small mammals in general, shared no doubt by some of its allies. I had never before found it in this district; but a specimen was taken long ago by Sharp at Eltham, barely two miles distant, and apparently referred by him to '*glyptocephalus* Saulcy' (see Fowler, 1889, *Col. Brit. Isl.* 3: 75 under *N. carinatus*; Allen, *l.c. supra*). Another (and by no means common) Scydmaenid, *Euconnus fimetarius* Chaud., occurred sparingly at the same time in the straw sifting, though never seen there on any of several earlier occasions; this species, however, is tolerably well known from the London suburbs and West Kent generally, but doubtless most records from the former area are old. – A. A. ALLEN.

PARARGE AGERIA L. (SPECKLED WOOD) IN WESTER ROSS – The recent note by P. K. Kinnear regarding this butterfly in Fife (*Ent. Rec.* 98: 21) prompts me to record that several were seen on 19th August 1985 along the track leading east through the Inverlael Forest towards Ben Dearg. The species appeared well-established, but is not recorded by Heath, Pollard & Thomas (*Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland*). A. J. SHOWLER, 12 Wedgwood Drive, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe, Bucks.